

Black Proletariat, ICU, Black Republic Thesis and Cradock Letter

Compilation

The documents collected here are from the period 1917 to 1934, that is from prior to the formation of the Communist Party of South Africa, up to the Cradock Letter of Moses Kotane. In this period the direction of the Party, the ANC and the trade union movement was effectively set into the shape that it still retains, and which at its broadest extent we call the National Democratic Revolution, or more specifically, the Tripartite Alliance.

These documents are taken from the book "South African Communists Speak", published in 1981.

The documents are as follows (using the numbering from the book):

- 13. "No Labour Movement without the Black Proletariat", 1917
- 15. "Workers of the Bantu Race", 1918
- 36. On the expulsion of Communists from the ICU, 1926
- 42. Black Republic Thesis of the Comintern, 1928
- 55. Kotane, for Africanisation in the Party, Cradock Letter, 1934

DOCUMENT 13:

Statement 'International Socialism and the Native - No Labour Movement without the Black Proletariat', published in *The International*, December 7, 1917

The Management Committee of the ISL has issued the following statement to the Branches as a basis of discussion at the Annual Conference. The MC recommends this statement of our attitude towards the native worker to be embodied in the League platform for 1918 propaganda. Comrades are invited to read it with a view to discussion, and amendment if they so desire, at the Conference of the League, which will be held in January 6th next.

The abolition of the Native Indenture, Passport and Compound Systems and the lifting of the Native Workers to the Political and Industrial Status of the White is an essential step towards the Emancipation of the Working-class in South Africa.

Society is divided into two classes: the working class, doing all the labour; and the idle class, living on the fruits of labour. Strictly speaking therefore there is no 'Native Problem'. There is only a working class problem.

But within the working class arises the problem of the native worker. In all countries the influx of cheap labour is used as a whip wherewith to beat the whole of the working class. In South Africa the cheap labourer, being black, is doubly resented by the higher paid worker. And the employers foment this colour prejudice through their newspapers, and are thus able to wield the whip of cheap labour with double effect.

The suicidal prejudice of the white workers against the coloured workers is the only native problem. This prejudice manufactures the scabs that beat both black and white in the day when the solidarity of all the workers is essential to victory.

We speak therefore to the workers, and above all to those workers who look forward to the emancipation of labour from wage slavery. There can be no appeal to any section of society. outside the working-class, as their interests are opposed to labour, and their opinions therefore of no account to us.

One section of the workers cannot benefit itself at the expense of the rest without betraying the hope of the children. Those who receive favours from the master class may lift themselves out of the propertiless proletariat: but their children will inherit the fear of the abyss which their fathers helped to create.

The power of labour lies in its ability to stop, or to control industry. **All** the workers are needed for this.

Labour, not Colour, is the watchword of solidarity.

If all those who labour cannot share in the emancipation of Labour, none can be emancipated.

'Labour cannot emancipate itself in the **White** while in the **Black** it is branded.'
(Marx)

So long as we refuse to admit the native worker into the ranks of Labour solidarity, so long will cheap labour pull down the white worker to the native standard of existence.

But so soon as we welcome the native worker into equality on the industrial field, then is he forthwith lifted up towards the white standard of living.

White standards are not in danger from the ambition of the native to improve.
White standards are endangered by the attempts to keep him down.

White standards will not be saved in South Africa by the White Labour Policy. White standards will only be saved by the **Black** workers organising industrially.

The highest social culture is safest in the keeping of the lowest paid labourers.

What makes native labour so cheap and exploitable in South Africa? Laws and regulations which, on the pretense of protecting society from barbarism, degrade the native workers to the level of serfs and herded cattle for the express uses of capital. These are:-

- The Passport system.
- The Compound System.
- The Native Indenture system.
- The special penal laws which make it a crime for a native to absent himself from work.
- The denial of civil liberty and political rights.

All those things which place the native & workers on a lower social plane than the white workers are weapons in the hands of the employing class to be used against all the workers, white and black.

These tyrant laws must be swept away. For these degrading conditions of native labour are the abyss into which masses of the white workers are continually being hurled by Capitalist competition.

Sweep them away! What pious horror is aroused by this demand! Unspeakable calamities will follow, we are told. But are they not the very cause of the social calamities they are supposed to guard against? Indeed, they are themselves the greatest of social calamities.

The cause of Labour demands the abolition of the Pass, the Compound, and the Indenture: and as the native workers gain in industrial solidarity, demands for them complete political equality with their white fellow workers.

Only thus can the whole of the working class, white and black, march unitedly forward to their common emancipation from wage slavery.

DOCUMENT 15:

Text of leaflet published in *The International*, February 15, 1918.

Editorial Note (from African Communists Speak):

*During a boycott of concession stores on the Witwatersrand organised by African mineworkers because, in the words of **The International**, 'Prices of commodities have gone up double while the wages of the native labourer remain the same', the International Socialist League circulated a leaflet in Sesuto and Zulu throughout the compounds - the first time a direct approach had been made to the African workers in their own languages.*

WORKERS OF THE BANTU RACE! Why do you live in slavery? Why are you not free as other men are free? Why are you kicked and spat upon by your masters? Why must you carry a pass before you can move anywhere? And if you are found without one, why are you thrown into prison? Why do you toil hard for little money? And again thrown into prison if you refuse to work. Why do they herd you like cattle into compounds,

WHY?

Because you are the toilers of the earth. Because the masters want you to labour for their profit. Because they pay the Government and the Police to keep you as slaves to toil for them.

If it were not for the money that they make from your labour, you would not be oppressed.

But mark! You are the mainstay of the country. You do all the work, you are the means of their living.

That is why you are robbed of the fruits of your labour and robbed of your liberty as well.

There is only one way of deliverance for you, Bantu workers. Unite as workers, unite! Forget the things that divide you. Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu, or Shangaan. You are all labourers. Let Labour be your common bond.

Wake up! And open your ears. The sun has arisen, the day is breaking. For a long time you were asleep when the great mill of the rich man was grinding and breaking the sweat from your work for nothing. You are strongly urged to come to the meeting of the workers and fight for your rights. Come and listen to the good news and deliver yourselves from the chains of the Capitalist. Unity is strength. The fight

is great against the many pass laws that persecute you, and the low wages and the misery of existence. Workers of all lands unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to win.

DOCUMENT 36:

On the expulsion of Communists from the ICU - extracts from Communist Party manifesto in *The South African Worker*, December 24, 1926.

Editorial Note (from African Communists Speak):

The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) founded by Clements Kadalie in 1919, had developed in the early years of the 1920s into the biggest African mass movement ever seen in South Africa, with branches in the main centres of the country and a membership estimated at over 100, 000 Communist Party members like J. La Guma and E.J. Khaile had played a big part in building up the ICU, and by 1926 four Communists were on the ICU executive, with J. La Guma its general secretary. By this time, however, Kadalie had started to come under the influence of white liberals, and his leadership began to falter as he turned away from militancy towards a policy of reformism. At a meeting of the National Council of the ICU in Port Elizabeth on December 16, 1926, Kadalie launched a furious attack on the Communist Party for 'interfering' in the internal affairs of the ICU and a resolution was passed by 6 votes to 5 that no officer of the ICU shall be a member of the Communist Party'.t Next morning La Guma asked what the position was of Communist Party members who were already officers of the organisation, and was informed by the chairman that they must resign either from the ICU or from the Communist Party. They refused to do either and on being told they were therefore expelled left the room singing the 'Red Flag' This was the beginning of the end of the ICU as an effective mass organisation in South Africa.

To the Native Workers and Oppressed Peoples of Africa.

To the Members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (ICU).

Fellow Workers and Comrades,

At this critical moment, when the Government of Hertzog, Roos and Co is planning new slave laws for the native masses of South Africa, traitors and dupes of the Bosses are trying to break up the only effective organisation you have which is capable of putting up a real fight against oppression and slavery - the ICU.

On December 16th the National Council of the ICU met at Port Elizabeth, but instead of deciding on a fighting policy against Hertzog's proposed slave legislation, Messrs Kadalie, Champion and Co., proceeded to destroy the fighting energy of the

ICU by expelling the following members:

- J.A. La Guma, ICU General Secretary.
- E.J. Khaile, ICU Financial Secretary.
- Gomas, Cape Provincial Secretary.

These three comrades were expelled for no other reason than because they were active members of the Communist Party.

They were not accused of not doing their work in the ICU properly. No! Every member of the ICU, including Kadalie, Champion, and others, knows full well that these three comrades have given their whole life and energy to the building up of the ICU. They were expelled because they belonged to the only political party in this country which has all along championed the cause of the oppressed native masses of Africa.

The Communist Party has persistently fought for a united front of all workers and oppressed against the common enemy, the capitalists.

The Communist Party was and is the staunchest friend of the ICU. It appeals to all native workers to join up and help to build a still stronger ICU.

The Communist Party is not in opposition to the ICU. It is a political party, whereas the ICU is a trade union. Nearly every member of the Communist Party is a trade unionist, and some hold office in the trade union movement. No other trade union has ever suggested that they should be expelled.

Comrades! You are told that one cannot serve two masters. Your expelled officials have never served two masters, but only one - the downtrodden workers of Africa. They have carried out their duties as working class fighters as no other ICU leaders have.

Who are the people who serve two masters? Kadalie, Champion and the other 'good boys' who seek to split your ranks in the midst of the enemy attack!

WORKERS OF AFRICA!

Do not allow 'good boys' and other boss-class instruments to get control of the ICU. Demand that Comrades La Guma, Khaile and Gomas be immediately reinstated.

Demand that your leaders take up a real fighting working class policy instead of relying on the capitalist law courts.

Down with the traitors who live on the sweat and blood of the toiling masses and insult those Native workers who with magnificent courage came out on strike for their rights.

Down with the 'good boys' Kadalie, Champion and Co., when they seek to break your organisation up.

Long live the unity of the oppressed working class.

Long live a united and fighting ICU.

THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

DOCUMENT 42:

Resolution on 'The South African Question' adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International following the Sixth Comintern congress.

South Africa is a British Dominion of the colonial type. The development of relations of capitalist production has led to British imperialism carrying out the economic exploitation of the country with the participation of the white bourgeoisie of South Africa (British and Boer). Of course, this does not alter the general colonial character of the economy of South Africa, since British capital continues to occupy the principal economic positions in the country (banks, mining and industry), and since the South African bourgeoisie is equally interested in the merciless exploitation of the negro population.

In the recent period in South Africa we have witnessed the growth of the 'manufacturing iron and steel industries, the development of commercial crops (cotton, sugar, cane), and the growth of capitalist relations in agriculture, chiefly in cattle-raising. On the basis of this growth of capitalism there is a growing tendency to expropriate the land from the negroes and from a certain section of the white farming population. The South African bourgeoisie is endeavouring also by legislative means to create a cheap market of labour power and a reserve army.

The overwhelming majority of the population is made up of negroes and coloured people (about 5,500,000 negroes and coloured people and about 1,500,000 white people according to the 1921 census). A characteristic feature of the colonial type of the country is the almost complete landlessness of the negro population: the negroes hold only one-eighth of the land whilst seven-eighths have been expropriated by the white population. There is no negro bourgeoisie as a class,

apart from individual negroes engaged in trading and a thin strata of negro intellectuals who do not play any essential role in the economic and political life of the country. The negroes constitute also the majority of the working class: among the workers employed in industry and transport, 420,000 are black and coloured people and 145,000 white; among agricultural labourers 435,000 are black and 50,000 are white. The characteristic feature of the proletarianisation of the native population is the fact that the number of black workers grows faster than the number of white workers. Another characteristic fact is the great difference in the wages and the material conditions of the white and black proletariat in general. Notwithstanding a certain reduction in the living standard of the white workers which has lately taken place, the great disproportion between the wages of the white and black proletariat continues to exist as the characteristic feature of the colonial type of the country.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

The political situation reflects the economic structure - the semi-colonial character of the country and the profound social contradictions between the black and white population. The native population (except in the Cape province) of the country have no electoral rights, the power of the State has been monopolised by the white bourgeoisie, which has at its disposal the armed white forces. The white bourgeoisie, chiefly the Boers defeated by the arms of British imperialism at the close of the last century, had for a long time carried on a dispute with British capital. But as the process of capitalist development goes on in the country, the interests of the South African bourgeoisie are becoming more and more blended with the interests of British financial and industrial capital, and the white South African bourgeoisie is becoming more and more inclined to compromise with British imperialism, forming with the latter a united front for the exploitation of the native population.

The Nationalist Party, which represents the interests of the big farmers and landowners and a section of white (mainly Boer) bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie is winding up its struggle for separation from the Empire and is surrendering before British capitalism (the formula proposed by the leader of this Party, General Hertzog, and carried at the British Imperial Conference). Furthermore, this party is already coming out as the open advocate of the colonial expansion of British capital, carrying on an agitation for the extension of the territory of the Union of South Africa to the north (the annexation of Rhodesia), hoping in this manner to secure a vast fund of cheap native labour power.

Simultaneously with the importation of British capital and British goods, there are imported to South Africa the methods of corrupting the working class. The Labour

Party of South Africa, representing the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and of the skilled labour aristocracy, openly carries on an imperialist policy, demoralising the white workers by imbuing them with a white racial ideology. Nevertheless, the influence of this party is being undermined by the steady worsening of the material conditions of the mass of the white workers. At the same time the South African bourgeoisie is endeavouring to attract to its side certain elements of the non-European population, for instance, the 'coloured' population, promising them electoral rights, and also the native leaders, turning them into agents for the exploitation of the negro population. This policy of corruption has already brought about the fact that the leaders of the negro trade union organisations - the Industrial and Commercial Union - having expelled the Communists from the union, are now endeavouring to guide the negro trade union movement into the channel of reformism. The inception of negro reformism, as a result of the corruptionist policy of the white bourgeoisie, a reformism which acts in close alliance with the Amsterdam International, constitutes a characteristic fact of the present political situation.

The united front of the British and South African white bourgeoisie against the toiling negro population, backed by the white and negro reformists, creates for the Communist Party in South Africa an exceptionally complicated but favourable position of being the only political Party in the country which unites the white and black proletariat and the landless black peasantry for the struggle against British imperialism, against the white bourgeoisie and the white and black reformist leaders.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS TASKS

The Executive Committee of the Communist International recognises the successes which the Communist Party of South Africa has recently achieved. This is seen in the growth of the Communist Party, which is now predominantly native in composition. The Communist Party has a membership of about 1,750 of whom 1,600 are natives or coloured. The Communist Party has also spread into the country districts of the Transvaal. The Party has waged a fight against the reactionary Native Administration Act. The ECCI also notes the growth of native trade unions under the leadership of the CP, the successful carrying through of a number of strikes and efforts to carry through the amalgamation of the black and white unions.

The present intensified campaigns of the Government against the natives offer the CP an immense field to develop its influence among the workers and peasants, and it is among this section of the South African population that the chief field of activity of the Communist Party must continue to lie in the near future.

- a) The first task of the Party is to reorganise itself on the shop and street nuclei basis and to put forward a programme of action as a necessary condition for the building up of a mass Communist Party in South Africa.
- b) The Party must orientate itself chiefly upon the native toiling masses while continuing to work actively among the white workers. The Party leadership must be developed in the same sense. This can only be achieved by bringing the native membership without delay into much more active leadership of the Party both locally and centrally.
- c) While developing and strengthening the fight against all the customs, laws and regulations which discriminate against the native and coloured population in favour of the white population, the Communist Party of South Africa must combine the fight against all anti-native laws with the general political slogan in the fight against British domination, the slogan of an independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic, with full equal rights for all races, black, coloured and white.
- d) South Africa is a black country, the majority of its population is black and so is the majority of the workers and peasants. The bulk of the South African population is the black peasantry, whose land has been expropriated by the white minority. Seven eighths of the land is owned by the whites. Hence the national question in South Africa, which is based upon the agrarian question lies at the foundation of the revolution in South Africa. The black peasantry constitutes the basic moving force of the revolution in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class.
- e) South Africa is dominated politically by the white exploiting class. Despite the conflict of interests between the Dutch bourgeoisie and the English imperialists, the basic characteristic of the political situation in South Africa is the developing united front between the Dutch bourgeoisie and the British imperialists against the native population. No political party in South Africa with the exception of the Communist Party advocates measures that would be of real benefit to the oppressed native population, the ruling political parties never go beyond empty and meaningless liberal phrases. The Communist Party of South Africa is the only Party of native and white workers that fights for the complete abolition of race and national exploitation, that can head the revolutionary movement of the black masses for liberation. Consequently, if the Communist Party correctly understands its political tasks it will and must become the leader of the national agrarian revolutionary movement of the native masses.

Unfortunately the Communist Party of South Africa did not give evidence of sufficient understanding of the revolutionary importance of the mass movements of the native workers and peasants. The Communist Party of South Africa carried on a correct struggle for unity of the native and white workers in the trade union movement. But at the same time the Communist Party of South Africa found itself

in stubborn opposition to the correct slogan proposed by the Comintern calling for an independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic with full, equal rights for all races.

This opposition shows a lack of understanding of the task of our Party in South Africa relative to the revolutionary struggles of the native masses, which explains partly the still insufficient growth of the political influence of our Party upon the negro masses despite the extremely favourable conditions.

South Africa is a British dominion of a colonial type. The country was seized by violence by foreign exploiters, the land expropriated from the natives, who were met by a policy of extermination in the first stages of colonisation, and conditions of semi-slavery established for the overwhelming majority of the native masses. It is necessary to tell the native masses that in the face of existing political and economic discrimination against the natives and ruthless oppression of them by the white oppressors, the Comintern slogan of a native republic means restoration of the land to the landless and land-poor population.

This slogan does not mean that we ignore or forget about the non-exploiting elements of the white population. On the contrary, the slogan calls for 'full and equal rights for all races'. The white toiling masses must realise that in South Africa they constitute national minorities, and it is their task to support and fight jointly with the native masses against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists. The argument against the slogan for a native republic on the ground that it does not protect the whites is objectively nothing else than a cover for the unwillingness to accept the correct principle that South Africa belongs to the native population. Under these conditions it is the task of the Communist Party to influence the embryonic and crystallising national movements among the natives in order to develop these movements into national agrarian revolutionary movements against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialists.

The failure to fulfil this task means separation of the Communist Party of South Africa from the native population. The Communist Party cannot confine itself to the general slogan of 'Let there be no whites and no blacks'. The Communist Party must understand the revolutionary importance of the national and agrarian questions. Only by a correct understanding of the importance of the national question in South Africa will the Communist Party be able to combat effectively the efforts of the bourgeoisie to divide the white and black workers by playing on race chauvinism, and to transform the embryonic nationalist movement into a revolutionary struggle against the white bourgeoisie and foreign imperialists. In its propaganda among the native masses the Communist Party of South Africa must emphasise the class differences between the white capitalists and the white workers, the latter also

being exploited by the bourgeoisie as wage slaves, although better paid as compared with the natives. The Communist Party must continue to struggle for unity between black and white workers and not confine itself merely to the advocacy of 'co-operation' between the blacks and whites in general. The Communist Party must introduce a correct class content into the idea of co-operation between the blacks and whites. It must explain to the native masses that the black and white workers are not only allies, but are the leaders of the revolutionary struggle of the native masses against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialism. A correct formulation of this task and intensive propagation of the chief slogan of a native republic will result not in the alienation of the white workers from the Communist Party, not in segregation of the natives, but, on the contrary, in the building up of a solid united front of all toilers against capitalism and imperialism.

In the struggle against the domination of British imperialism in South Africa and against the white bourgeoisie under the slogans of the agrarian revolution and native republic the Communist Party of South Africa will undoubtedly meet with the most brutal attack of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists. This can be no argument for not adopting the slogan of a native republic. On the contrary, the Party must wage a struggle for this slogan preparing all possible means, first and foremost by mobilising the black and white workers, to meet the attacks of the ruling class.

The ECCI, while fully approving the Party's agitation against the native Bills put forward by the Pact Government, considers that this agitation should be further strengthened and intensified and should be coupled with agitation against all anti-native legislation.

The Party should pay particular attention to the embryonic national organisations among the natives, such as the African National Congress. The Party, while retaining its full independence, should participate in these organisations, should seek to broaden and extend their activity. Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organisation against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organisations, etc., developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organisation. The Party should seek to weaken the influence of the native chiefs corrupted by the white bourgeoisie over the existing native tribal organisations by developing peasants' organisations and spreading among them the influence of the Communist Party. The development of a national-revolutionary movement of the toilers of South Africa against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialism, constitutes one of the major tasks of the Communist Party of South Africa.

The Party should immediately work out an agrarian programme applicable to the

native agrarian situation. The ECCI considers that the Party was correct in launching at its last Congress the slogan of 'Expropriate the big estates and give them to the landless whites and natives'. But this can only be treated as a general slogan. It is necessary to work out concrete partial demands which indicate that the basic question in the agrarian situation in South Africa is the land hunger of the blacks and that their interest is of prior importance in the solution of the agrarian question. Efforts should be made immediately to develop plans to organise the native peasants into peasant unions and the native agricultural workers into trade unions, while attention to the poor agrarian whites must in no way be minimised.

In the field of trade union work the Party must consider that its main task consists in the organisation of the native workers into trade unions as well as propaganda and work for the setting up of a South African trade union centre embracing black and white workers. The principle that the Party's main orientation must be on the native population applies equally well to the sphere of trade union work. The Party should energetically combat the splitting policy of the Industrial and Commercial Union leaders under the slogan of unity of the whole trade union movement of South Africa. Further, the Party should work out a detailed programme of immediate demands for the native workers. The Communists must participate actively in the trade union organisation of the native workers, pursuing the policy of building up a strong left-wing within these organisations under Communist leadership.

The Party should continue its exposure of the South African Labour Party as primarily an agent of imperialism in the Labour movement.

While concentrating its chief attention on organising the native workers in the trade unions the Communist Party should not neglect the workers in the white trade unions. Its tasks are the organisation of the unorganised workers in the existing trade unions, to intensify the propaganda for reorganisation of the trade union movement on an industrial basis, increased agitation for affiliation of all trade unions to the Trade Union Congress. In all trade union organisations the Party must strive to build up a strong left-wing under Communist leadership.

The Party must energetically combat the influence of the Amsterdam International in the black and white trade union movement, intensifying the propaganda for world trade union unity along the lines of the Profintern (RILU) policy.

In connection with the danger of world war, the present imperialist intervention in China and the threatening war against the USSR the Party must fight by all means against the help given to the military policy of Great Britain which found its expression in the tacit support of the break of the British imperialists with the USSR.

The Party should not neglect anti-militarist work.

The ECCI repeats its previous proposal to launch a special paper in the chief native languages as soon as technical difficulties have been overcome. Such a step is of great political importance.

DOCUMENT 55:

Letter calling for Africanisation in the Party from Moses M Kotane in Cradock to Johannesburg District Party Committee dated February 23, 1934.

Dear Comrades,

In my last report I promised my conclusions arrived at from my recent observations. What I have learnt from my recent study has further strengthened my old conclusions (known only to a few leading elements in our Party) that our Party has and is suffering owing to being too Europeanised. That the Party is beyond the realm of realities, we are simply theoretical and our theory is less connected with practice. If one investigates the general ideology of our Party members (especially the whites), if sincere, he will not fail to see that they subordinate South Africa in the interests of Europe, in fact, ideologically they are not S Africans, they are foreigners who know nothing about and who are the least interested in the country in which they are living at present, but are valiant 'servants' of Europe. They are 'revolutionaries' and 'Bolsheviks', their hobbies are 'the German situation and the Comintern, Stalin and Trotsky and 'the errors of various communist parties.'

But such conception is just the opposite of Bolshevism. But we are living in a culturally backward Africa - Africa is culturally or economically backward. The oppressed and exploited people of Africa are without the 150 years of organisational tradition possessed by the European working class. The European (the term European is used in its correct sense - not for white), language is therefore not blindly applicable for S Africa. In Europe self-consciousness (class) has developed immensely whilst here national oppression, discrimination and exploitation confuses the class war and the majority of the African working population are more national conscious than class conscious.

Socialism, the proletarian revolution to our rural population (the majority) is but a vague expression which sounds more as a dream than a reality, to them it sounds like the 'land of Canaan' which can be 'attained only after death.'

The Independent Native Republic which in essence means a bourgeois republic, but which the S African (owing to the objective conditions), must necessarily

presuppose a democratic workers and peasant republic, has different premise, language and attitude to that of the proletarian dictatorship and socialist revolution and it is precisely here where the crux of our argument necessarily 'revolves. It is from this premise that the author bases his arguments, that the general propaganda for a democratic workers and peasants republic cannot be identical with that for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The identity or the identification of the two different historical stages is nothing but rank opportunism, a minimisation of our present task. We created imaginary bureaucracy *sometimes* where it did not exist, but just because our European comrades are fighting real bureaucracy. We have sometimes followed International Press Correspondence phrases and terminology in this country. We must learn from our European brothers but we should not lose sight of the fact that Europe differs historically, politically and economically with S Africa.

I started my observations in Queenstown among the African intellectuals, elements hostile to communism. But their hostility is due rather to ignorance. Among them I found some staunch nationalists, people who have not time for white people, but for their dependent economic position. Since then I am working among the non-intellectual section of the Native people. They are most interesting of the whole lot. They are revolutionary, but have not yet learnt the weapon of organisation and some of them are misled by ministers, they are religious, they all believe in the existence of God and in the bible, but disapprove of the venality of the leaders of the churches. They find proofs for everything they say in the bible. Personally they are rather nationalistic, but so far I always succeed in bringing them to my point of view, e.g. on the question of poor whites.

The Independent African National Congress has deeply entrenched itself in these districts, Cradock, Tarkastad, and its leaders are extremely popular. It would simply be tactlessness to denounce Tonjeni at present. He has won the confidence of his followers and many admire him. Up to now I have met two groups of his followers. First on Wednesday 14th instant (12) and Thursday 22nd instant (10) meeting again some on Monday night (26th). I am very pleased with these two groups so far and would be very pleased to see such serious people among our so-called Party members.

I think it is time I ended my 'sophisticated' arguments and gave some suggestions. My first suggestion is that the Party become more Africanised or Afrikanised, that the CPSA must pay special attention to S Africa, study the conditions in this country and concretise the demands of the toiling masses from first hand information, that we must speak the language of the Native masses and must know their demands. That while it must not lose its international allegiance, the Party must be Bolshevised, become South African not only theoretically, but in reality, it should be

a Party working in the interests and for the toiling people in S Africa and not a party of a group of Europeans who are merely interested in European affairs.

With revolutionary greetings.
Yours fraternally,
MOSES M KOTANE.

Editorial Note:

The Independent African National Congress (Cape) had been formed in 1931 by Elliot Tonjeni and other left-wing members who had been driven out of the Cape ANC by the dictatorial action of the chairman 'Professor' Thaele. Tonjeni had been banished to the Eastern Cape by Justice Minister Pirow, and the Independent ANC drew most of its support from country branches in the region.

Course: National Democratic Revolution

12031, SA Communists, Black Proletariat, ICU, Black Republic Thesis, and Cradock Letter

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